

## Usmonkhoja Polatkhoja's Son and His Role in National Liberation Movements of Turkestan

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### ABSTRACT

In the early twentieth century, major representatives of the Jadid movement became active participants in the socio-political processes in the Turkestan region. Usmonkhoja Polatkhoja, a progressive from Bukhara, was one of the beams not only in the Emirate of Bukhara, but also in Turkestan. He first participated in the reforms and progressives, and later in the national liberation movements, and fought for the prosperity and independence of the country. This article provides information about Usmonkhoja's life and work in Jadidism, revolts, national liberation struggles, and emigration.

**Keywords:** Jadidism; Company; New method school; Education; Uprising; National liberation movements; Cooperation; Newspaper.

One of the largest representatives of the Jadid movement in Bukhara in the early twentieth century was Usmonkhoja Polatkhoja. Usmonkhoja's father was the son of a great merchant from Bukhara, Polatkhoja Karomatulloh, who often traveled to Andijan, Margilan, Kuva, Khojand and Osh to develop his trade. In Osh (a city in Kyrgyzstan), Polatkhoja, who owned his own shops, married an Uzbek woman named Fatima and in 1878 they had a son. He named him Usmonkhodja, and when the period "chilla" (40 day after the child born) finished, he brought his family to Bukhara.

Young Usmon first graduated from the old school in Bukhara, then the madrasa. His father also hired a private teacher at home to develop his son's secular knowledge. Polatkhoja was a regular subscriber of the newspapers and magazines published in Bogchasaray, Baku, Kazan and Istanbul, and his son Usmonkhodja also read those publications and keeps abreast of world events and changes.

Usmonkhodja traveled to Osh to assist his father in trade and was in close contact with national liberation fighters there. In May 1898, Usmonkhodja also took part in the revolt in Andijan, which began under Madali Eshan (1856-1998) against the rule of the Russian Empire. When the uprising was suppressed, among the 777 captives, Usmonkhodja and his relatives were released with the intervention of his father and returned to their homeland. It was during this period that Usmonkhodja took an active part in the Jadid movement, which began to spread in Turkestan, and became one of the important leaders of Bukhara Jadidism.

In March 1909, Bukhara intellectuals, entrepreneurs and merchants established "the company of Bukhara Sharif" to provide financial support to Jadid schools. Along with providing textbooks and other materials to Jadid schools, the company started sending talented young people to various places to learn new ways of modern education. In particular, Usmonkhodja and Homidkhodja were sent to Bogchasaray and Istanbul to get acquainted with the new methodological schools under the auspices of this company.

In 1909, Homidkhoja and Usmonkhoja spent a year with Ismailbek Gaspirali in Bogchasaray, observing and learning the new system and methods of education in the Jadid schools in Kirim. In 1910, Usmonkhoja and

Homidkhoja went to Istanbul. Their visit to Turkey frightened the Russian ambassador at Istanbul and ambassador informed to Russian Emperor Nicholas II. When the emperor asked the Emir of Bukhara Abdulahadkhan about Usmankhoja and Homidkhoja Mehriy, the emir said: *“They are young students. Those who went to Turkey to study”*.

Beside Usmankhoja, Abdurauf Fitrat (1886-1938) and other young people from Bukhara came to Istanbul at that time to study in madrasah in Istanbul. In order to help morally and economically to Usmonkhoja, Abdurauf Fitrat and other students who study in Istanbul On October 26, 1909, the Istanbul branch of the “Tarbiyayi Atfol” organization “Bukhara Taste of Education” (Bukhara Charity Society for the Dissemination of Education) was established.

In 1913, Usmonkhodja returned to his homeland from Turkey and opened a Jadid school in Bukhara at the house of his cousin, the great merchant Latifkhodja. He also participated in the activities of the Bukhara Jadids organization “Tarbiyayi atfol” (“Children's education”) and the establishment of the newspapers “Bukhara Sharif” and “Turon”. According to Sadriddin Ayni, in 1913 the students of the Usmonkhoja's school were mainly his relatives, and later many fathers brought their children to this school to study. In the summer of that year, as a result of the increase in the number of students in the school, Usmankhoja rented another building and began teaching the children with two assistant teachers. In 1914, when the number of students reached 200, Usmonkhodja moved the school to his home.

At Usmonkhodja school, children are divided into classes according to their age, no more than 4-5 hours a day, a 10-minute break after each lesson, equal teaching of religious and secular sciences, 2 months of annual holiday for children, periodic examinations of students new procedures such as standing have been introduced. In addition to national textbooks and manuals, textbooks, globes, maps, and European literature translated into Turkish were widely used in the teaching process.

Officials in the Russian Empire in Bukhara began to worry that Jadid schools would become more popular, and decided to use fanatical clerics to close them. Pretending to be benevolent to the youth of Bukhara, in fact, they incite the scholars against them.

Historical sources confirm that clerics and court officials tried to offer Jadid schoolchildren large sums of money and prestigious high positions. According to Sadriddin Aini, Mulla Qamariddin Usmonkhoja, a representative of the Bukhara Qaziqalan, told Burhaniddin: *“If you voluntarily close your school, I promise to make you a judge or chairman of your choice.”* Then Usmonkhodja replied, *“We have put so much hardship on ourselves, not because we are hungry or unable to get a high position, but because we want to benefit the people and the children of our country. We will not sell our sacred advice to the world.”*

Shulga, an aide to Russia's political agent in Bukhara, went to the Usmonkhodja school without warning and was surprised to see the conditions there. According to him, Usmonkhodja had two very spacious classrooms on the first and second floors in the courtyard of his house, in the rooms there were tables and chairs made in Europe and Bukhara, two or three globes on the shelves inside the walls, as well as many books published in Samarkand, notebooks given to students.

Shulga acknowledged that *“the school was very tidy and very advanced compared to the old method schools”* [6: 296]. Shulga, who described himself as a defender of Bukhara's youth and Jadid schools, said the visit was in fact an innocence of Russia's political agency in Bukhara when the schools were closed.

Along with the implementation of reforms in the field of education, Usmonkhodja was also an active participant in the socio-political processes taking place in the Turkestan region. In particular, during the First World War (1914-1918), when the Russian Emperor Nicholas II issued a decree in 1916 to recruit Turkestan men aged 16 to 40 for frontline work, Usmonkhodja became one of the ideological leaders of the popular uprisings.

Leaders of Turkestan Jadids Munavvar Qori, Pahlavon Niyazi, Usmonkhoja, Qori Kamil, Obidjon Mahmud and others gathered at Mahmudhoja Behbudi's house in Samarkand to protest against the imperial decree and demand more freedoms for Turkestan. About Usmonkhoja's participation in this meeting in Samarkand in his notebook: *“I was in Bukhara, Mahmu*Leaders of Turkestan Jadids Munavvar Qori, Pahlavon Niyazi, Usmonkhoja, Qori Kamil, Obidjon Mahmud and others gathered at Mahmudhoja Behbudi's house in Samarkand to protest against the imperial decree and demand more freedoms for Turkestan. About Usmonkhoja's participation in this meeting in Samarkand in his notebook: *“when I was in Bukhara, Behbudi sent me a telegram and asked me to come to Samarkand immediately. So I attended a meeting to plan the 1916 uprising.”*

A year later, under the influence of political events in Russia in February 1917, one of the organizers of the demonstrations in the city on April 7, 1917, as a result of the proclamation of the decree of reforms by the Emir of Bukhara Alimkhan, was Usmankhoja. Ahmad Nayim, brothers Usmonkhodja and Otaullahoja were among the 30 young Bukhara residents arrested during the protest, Usmonkhodja, who escaped from the Amir's prison, came to New Bukhara with 15 companions, from where some of the Jadids emigrated to Samarkand and others to Tashkent.

After the dissolution of the Bukhara Emirate in September 1920, Usmon Khoja began his career as Minister of Finance (1920-1921) in the new government. In 1921 he was the inspector of state control, from August 1921 to early 1922 he was the chairman of the All-Bukhara Central Executive Committee.

During his work in the Republic of Bukhara, the registration and use of foundation lands, the opening of cultural and educational centers, the repair of architectural monuments, the expulsion of the Red Army of 50,000 people from Bukhara, the establishment of a national army, independent foreign policy, strengthening the country's borders and the Uzbek language, formalizes it as a language and strives to apply it to life.

It is known that the national liberation and resistance movements that began in the country at the time of the formation of the Bukhara Republic intensified in 1921-1922. Soviet leaders began to use prominent figures in the Bukhara Republic, such as Usmonkhodja, to pacify freedom fighters. On March 10, 1921, the All-Bukhara Emergency Situations Representation for East Bukhara was established and Usmonkhodja was appointed chairman. During his stay in Eastern Bukhara as an extraordinary representative of the BXSР, Usmonkhodja witnessed the brutal looting of the people by the Red Army and issued a declaration after the incident, calling on the population to take up arms for independence and fight against Russian troops: *“The greatest dream of all of us is to achieve freedom and independence by getting rid of the aggression of the enemy that has ruled Turkestan for more*

*than half a century. Now is the time to achieve that goal. I invite those who have weapons in their hands and can use weapons to this honorable mission. Long live freedom and independence! ”*

On December 9, 1921, with the help of his assistants: Ali Rizobek, Deputy Minister of Military Affairs, Hasanbek, Commander of the Termez Garrison, and Doniyolbek, Usmonkhodja disarmed the Red Army in the Dushanbe garrison with the participation of national military units. Meanwhile, Turkish military commander Anwar Pasha, who was stationed at Ibrahimbek Korboshi's residence near Dushanbe, sent his assistants Haji Somi (Salim Pasha) and Osman Efendi with a group of soldiers to help Usmankhoja. However, unable to reach an agreement with Ibrahimbek, Usmonkhodja retreated to Bobotag and in early January 1922 arrived in Behbudi (Karshi) with the national military units at his disposal. Here he completely severed ties with the Soviets and moved towards independence. When the national liberation movement began to fail, he traveled to Kabul to seek help from foreign countries. On April 29, 1922, in Kabul, as one of the leaders of the BXSr, he signed an agreement with the Emir of Afghanistan Amanullah Khan to fight against Russia.

When Usmonkhodja later wanted to return to Bukhara, Fayzulla Khodjaev sent him a letter warning him that he would not return to the country and because he might be captured by the Bolsheviks if he returned. Usmankhoja did not stay in Afghanistan long. He traveled to Turkey via India. He arrived in Istanbul in September 1923 and applied for political asylum in Turkey. Mustafa Kemal, who received Usmankhoja as his guest, offered him a job in the newly formed government of the young Republic of Turkey. In response to this proposal, Usmankhoja said that he intended to deal with the issues of Turkestan culture in the future. Mustafa Kemal said he would support Usmonkhoja morally and economically and would provide him with a state pension. Usmankhoja received this pension for the rest of his life, and after his death. Usmankhoja founded a special newspaper, Yangi Turkiston, which promoted the culture of the Uzbek and Turkish peoples in Turkey and condemned the Bolshevik policy of aggression. As a result, the Bolsheviks, dissatisfied with Usmankhoja's ideological struggle against the Soviets, began to put pressure on the Turkish government. Usmankhoja was expelled from Turkey in October 1938 by the decision of the Turkish Council of Ministers. Usmankhoja lived in Warsaw, Poland, from 1938 to 1939, and in Tehran, the capital of Iran during World War II. Soviet spies were also looking for Osman Khoja in Iran. At the end of 1944, Turkey readmitted Osmankhoja and he returned to Istanbul. Usmankhoja lived in Pakistan between 1951-1957 and formed the Turkestan Society there. He returned to Istanbul in 1957 and lived there for the rest of his life. Usmankhoja, who spent 90 years in uprisings, Jadidism and national liberation struggles, died in Istanbul on July 28, 1968.

In summary, one of the great representatives of the Bukhara Jadid movement, Usmonkhodja, entered the arena of struggle for the development of the country and its transformation into an independent state. He organized a Jadid school to enlighten the people, to teach the children secular knowledge along with religious knowledge. At the same time, he became an active participant in the ongoing socio-political processes in the Turkestan region. Firstly he fought against to the Russian Empire, then the Bolshevik government. The policy which began in 1938, did not bypass Usmonkhoja, who lived abroad. He was constantly persecuted by Soviet spies. However, he did not give up his mission and purpose, and remained on Turkish soil in the grief of his homeland!

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